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ABSTRACT

This evaluation of Florida's extensive system (from 140 to 395 youths) of self-contained juvenile training schools (TS) profiles the delinquent client population and examines the recidivism rate. After discussing the dangers of using recidivism as the sole indicator of rehabilitation, the study's methodology is explained. A random sample follows the subjects from furlough (parole) through a year of followup study. Case files provide data on the child and family; only the background variables of sex, number of prior commitments, and type of offense show a significant relation to success, while in-program experience shows non-significant relation to success. A comparison is made with earlier data, and goals for future studies are suggested. (LS)

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Evaluation of Florida's Juvenile Training Schools

1977

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Youth Services Program

PLANNING COORDINATION UNIT

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Florida's Juvenile Training Schools: A Population Profile and Recidivism Study

Introduction: The Four Training Schools

The Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, through its district administrations operates four institutions, or Training Schools (TS), as well as a great number and variety of smaller community-based programs, for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. The Training Schools are all located in rural areas, and function largely as self-contained units. Each TS has its own school system, with vocational as well as academic classes. Each institution also operates its own treatment program, which is based on reality therapy, and is implemented through guided peer group interaction sessions. In addition, supplementary medical, psychiatric and psychological care is purchased outside the unit, but the capability is built in for dealing with most cases and situations. The institutions have twenty-four hour staffing which includes custodial positions, to supply food, laundry, security, grounds care, etc., as well as personnel for the school, treatment programs and administration.

The two largest facilities house all male populations[1]. Florida School for Boys at Okeechobee (HRS District IX, Okeechobee County in Central Florida) had an average daily population of 395 in 1973, the year sampled. Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys at Marianna (HRS District II, Jackson County, in the north Florida panhandle) averaged 355 boys in 1973. The average populations were approximately equal to the budgeted capacity for each TS. Over-crowding, a recurring problem in the Florida Juvenile correctional system, was not a factor during the year sampled.

The Alyce D. McPherson School at Ocala (HRS District III, Marion County, in north central Florida) is a smaller, co-ed facility. In 1973 the average daily population was 195 children, approximately 80% female. McPherson operated age-graded "junior" and "senior" campuses for the first six months of 1973, but the former was closed and the school functioned as a unified program for the rest of the year.

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[1] As of February 1, 1977 all four training schools began to accept girls from their own designated catchment area. The sex ratios cited in this report are time-specific to the period sampled.

Lancaster Youth Development Center at Trenton (HRS District III, Gilchrist County, in north central Florida), is the newest, most modern facility, first occupied in 1971. It offered a relatively long-term (average stays were about one year), co-ed treatment program for youth who had not adjusted well in other YS programs. Generally, admission was allowed only by transfer from another program. Thus LYDC came to serve as the "last resort" placement for children who were management problems for the system.[2] The student-to-staff ratios at LYDC were nearly twice as high as at other TS's (1:1.34 compared to 1:0.78). The Trenton campus had an average population of 149 youths in 1973, about 50% male, 50% female.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose for which this study was designed is that of providing a population profile for the Training Schools for the year studied. This information is a major source of input to the study of trends in client characteristics. The comparison of the TS profile with that of other program populations should provide a view of the selection process which sorted committed children among program options.

The second purpose of the study is the examination of the recidivism rate of the program, and the relationship of recidivism to variables posited by various theories as causes of crime and delinquency. Recidivism is traditionally the principal outcome measure used for evaluating the success of correctional programs. This is in large part due to the fact that recidivism means costly reincarceration, thus making these data crucial to accountability in cost effectiveness terms.

Arguments against reliance on recidivism as the single indicator for evaluating rehabilitative programs have often pointed out that parole situation variables may well be at least as important in determining success or failure as the correctional program itself. However, these variables are largely unmeasured, since access to data on such items is limited. Lerman (1968) notes that claiming reinstitutionalized boys as failures of a program as well as crediting as program successes those boys who stay free of reinvolvement, is unwarranted. He notes that "regardless of the type of program investigated, residential institutions for delinquents are characterized by high rates of potential failure." He urges a focus not on the rate per se, but on whether (and how) failure rates have been reduced, and proposes that the issue of humanitarianism should be given major consideration apart from the ideologies of treatment and success.

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[2] Beginning in 1977, the criteria of admission to LYDC and the nature of the program changed, and the facility began to be utilized as a "regular" training school, serving a designated catchment area. Thus the description above is time-specific to the period sampled.

Addressing this first focus, the relationship of recidivism to other variables is pursued in this study in the attempt to provide management data to program decision-makers by revealing whether the level of failure is increased or reduced when certain conditions prevail. For instance, if length of institutionalization is demonstrated to have a strong relationship to recidivism, this is a manipulable factor in the program, and policy can mandate optimal stays. This relationship has been the subject of considerable and inconclusive research, e.g., see Romig (1975) for a review of some studies and his data which reported no association between length of stay and recidivism. (Romig's report is of special interest since it describes a unique study situation in Texas, occasioned by a court-ordered release of juveniles at all points along their treatment program. Thus he can examine length of institutionalization and completeness of treatment program separately.)

Data on relationships between program variables and recidivism are particularly useful for formulation of placement policies designed to optimize the use of program alternatives. Demographic characteristics of clients, offense records, and previous commitment histories are all available prior to placement. If found to be differentially predictive of success in particular programs, the information can be utilized to help determine a child's most appropriate assignment. A review of studies seeking correlates of recidivism in criminological literature fails to produce definitive conclusions. Most authors cite several studies which counter their findings as well as several which were similar (e.g., Laulicht, 1963). Age and sex are among the few variables which produce fairly consistent results (e.g., Unkovic and Ducsay, 1967): males and younger delinquents (although the age limit for "younger" varies by study) almost always have higher recidivism rates than females and older offenders.

Dissatisfaction with recidivism as the sole measure of a program's impact has led researchers to seek to supplement this data with: 1) in-program adjustment measures, and 2) measures of partial success. Adjustment to institutional rules was examined by Sakata and Litwak (1971) and found to be negatively predictive; i.e., poor adjustment to general institutional rules was related to a high probability of recidivism. Sophisticated "impact scales", designed to measure inmate's perceptions of the program's effect on them, have been tested and utilized (Eynon, Allen, and Reckless, 1971; Miller and Dinitz, 1973). However, while they provide interesting data on how clients assess the programs, they have proven to be independent of measures of subsequent recidivism, i.e., they are not predictive.

An overview of the child's in-program experience in Florida Training Schools is attempted in this study through length of stay analysis and some program adjustment measures such as escapes (runaways), placement in the "adjustment unit", and transfers to other programs. When related to recidivism, these variables provide some indication as to how the dynamics of the commitment experience are related to post-program outcomes.

Measures of partial success, the specifics of recidivism data beyond a simple success-failure dichotomy, are also important for a broader picture of program outcome. Webb, et al. (1976) suggest a number of criteria to supplement the traditional recidivism measure with a more comprehensive definition. Several of these are appropriate to the juvenile parolee, and were used in the present study. For youths who failed (recidivated): How long did they stay in the community? ; How severe was the new offense relative to the original commitment offense? ; and, was the reinvolvement in the juvenile or adult criminal justice system? Answers to these questions will serve to broaden the view of program outcome beyond the success-failure dichotomy.

Methodology

A random sample of 100 youngsters was drawn from Training School furlough (parole) lists for calendar year 1973. Furlough lists were chosen as the source of the study population because they enumerate all program completers, the most appropriate group from which to judge program effectiveness. A sizeable number of youngsters (approximately one-third of commitments) are transferred from one program to another (e.g., from TS to a community-based program or vice-versa) while committed. Children who transfer into or between TSs and complete the program are included on the TS furlough list, while those who transfer out of Training Schools eventually complete some program and are counted among the furloughs of that program. The very small proportion of a program's population which is totally excluded by sampling furloughs is comprised of: 1) children who abscond and are never returned to the program; 2) rare in-program deaths; and 3) "other" exits[3].

Using a random number (N), the sample was selected by going through the TS furlough lists and drawing every Nth name. Sampling 100 cases provided a 5.2% sample of the 1,883 furloughs for 1973.

Data were collected by reviewing case files. Demographic data on the child and family were recorded as well as information on previous and subsequent involvement with the juvenile justice system. Further follow-up data were sought for all youngsters who had reached age 18 by July 1, 1975, by checking the Florida Department of Criminal Law Enforcement arrest records.

Follow-up data covered a one-year range of time (i.e., from 1½ to 2½ years from furlough, since the furlough lists used for sampling spanned a full year). Longer exposure to follow-up is typically related to a higher number of failures discovered, simply because a longer time period increases opportunities for offenses to be committed,

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[3] Sampling entrances to Training Schools would allow a more complete picture of in-program and post-program experiences, but such a study would require both a larger sample and a longer time frame to yield equivalent recidivism data.

and detected. In order to have a set of comparable information on the total sample and yet not omit any available information, follow-up data were collected in two time segments. The first segment covered any criminal justice system involvement that occurred within 18 months of the sampled YS furlough, a time frame common to all sampled cases. The second segment covered activities during any remaining time (zero to twelve months depending on furlough date) from the 18 month cutoff point until July 1, 1975.

Reinvolvements in the criminal justice system during the follow-up periods were recorded only if an official sanction resulting in a restriction of liberty occurred. This limitation was imposed because of the lack of uniform availability of referral/arrest records. Nine variations of reinvolvement were distinguished in coding and will be reported, but for simplicity of analysis these were dichotomized into "success" and "failure" in terms of recidivism:

Success (Non-recidivist): Youth who had no subsequent charges, in either the juvenile or adult criminal justice system, which resulted in a punitive (liberty-restricting) sanction.[4]

Failure (Recidivist): Youth who was subsequently revoked or recommitted to the juvenile justice system, placed on adult probation or suspended sentence, or committed to an adult jail or prison.

Training School Sample Profile

Table 1 shows the distribution of the Training School sample on the selected background variables. These data indicate that the 1973 program population was 31% female, 69% male[5]. The racial balance was 47% black, 52% white. Average age at furlough was 15.6 years (range 13-19). Urban and non-urban counties contributed about the same numbers to the commitment population. Both natural parents were present in the living situation of only 38% of the TS children; 14% were not living with either parent. Eighty percent of the known family incomes were below $10,000. Lack of information regarding the number of persons supported by this income prevents an assessment as to the proportion of the sample from poverty level homes. Data from samples to determine Title XX eligibility of YS clients show about 27% of committed youngsters are eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, etc. Thus a substantial portion of the TS population may be assumed to be from financially deprived home situations.

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[4] Those who were jailed pending a hearing on a charge but then released by the court are included as non-recidivists, as are those who were only fined for an offense.

[5] This sex ratio was compared with the composition of the population, a check which revealed more females in the sample (31%) than their proportion of the furlough list (23.5%). To offset this imbalance, an appropriately corrected (sex-weighted) recidivism rate was calculated for the overall program effectiveness measure. The construction of this rate is explained in Appendix A. The over-sampling of females is advantageous in terms of providing enough females for some within group analyses.

Table 1
Training School Sample Profile

A. Demographic Data

1) Sex	N(%)*	2) Race	N(%)
Female	31	Black	47 (47.5%)
Male	69	White	52 (52.5%)

3) Age at Selected Furlough	N(%)	4) Committing County**	N(%)
13 - 14 years	23	Urban	51
15 years	28	Non-Urban	49
16 years	23		
17 - 19 years	26		
Average Age	15.6 years		

5) Living Arrangements Prior to Commitment	N(%)
Both Natural Parents	38
Mother Only	26
Mother and Stepfather	15
Father (w/ or w/o Stepmother	7
Other (relative or non-relation)	14

6) Family Income	N(%)
Less than $ 5,000	28 (36%)
$ 5,000 - $ 10,000	34 (44%)
$ 10,001 - $ 15, 000	10 (13%)
$ 15,001 - $ 84,000	5 (7%)
No information	23

* Since the sample size is 100 cases, the percentage is the same as the number (N) except where data are missing. In those cases the percentage of the known total is shown in parentheses.

** Urban: County with population of 250,000 or more: Broward, Duval, Dade, Hillsborough, Orange, Palm Beach, Pinellas.

Non-Urban: County with population of less than 250,000

Table 1 (contd.)

B. Juvenile Justice History

7) Previous Referrals: Average ($\bar{X}$) = 4.6 referrals (range, 1-20)

for Persons Offenses*
(range, 0-3; 71 cases had 0) $\bar{X}$ = .39 referrals

for Property Offenses
(range, 0-8; 33 cases had 0) $\bar{X}$ = 1.96 referrals

for Victimless Offenses
(range, 0-4; 61 cases had 0) $\bar{X}$ = .61 referrals

for Technical Violations
(range, 0-6; 65 cases had 0) $\bar{X}$ = .55 referrals

for CINS (Status) Offenses
(range, 0-8; 35 cases had 0) $\bar{X}$ = 1.50 referrals

8) YS Status Prior to Selected Commitment	N(%)
None	6 (6%)
Consent Supervision	6 (6%)
Probation	64 (68%)
Aftercare	13 (14%)
Corrections ***	3 (3%)
Committed**	2 (2%)
No Information	6

9) Number of Previous Commitments	N(%)
None	77
One	20
Two	2
Three	1

10) Offense* of Current Commitment	N(%)
Persons	17
Property	42
Victimless	11
Technical	15
CINS (status)	15

* See Appendix B for a list of offenses included in each category.

** Occasionally a child is recommitted by the court even though already currently committed.

*** Where prior status is listed as corrections, this means that the youths were committed as adults, but were administratively transferred to YS under a Departmental agreement.

Part B of Table 1 shows that the TS sample averaged 4.6 YS referrals per child (three referrals was the modal, or most frequent, number) prior to the sample commitment. A referral is not the equivalent of a conviction, but rather indicates a reported law violation and, usually, a law enforcement contact. The number and nature of prior referrals are often factors in determining whether to file a petition against a child on a particular offense charge. This information is also weighed in considering the nature of the sanction to be imposed if the child is found guilty of an offense. The most frequent previous offenses were those against property, and CINS (status) offenses[6]. (See Appendix B for a list of specific offenses which are grouped into the general categories of Persons, Property, Victimless, Technical and Status Offenses.)

Ninety-four percent of the sample cases were under some kind of correctional supervision when committed. Eighty percent of the sample had been on probation at some time prior to commitment, indicating that an attempt had been made to deal with the child in a less restrictive manner prior to commitment.

Seventy-seven percent of the TS sample were first commitments. Of the remaining youngsters, twenty had only one previous commitment, three had two or more, Available information showed that eighteen of these "return commitments" had spent their previous commitment(s) in Training Schools; three had been in community-based YS programs. The average duration of previous commitments was seven months.

The offense which led to the selected commitment was most commonly a property offense (42% of the TS sample). Offenses against persons were the second most frequent type with 17%. Technical and status violations accounted for 15% each, and victimless offenses, only 11%.

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6 CINS (Child in Need of Supervision) or "status" offenses include truancy, runaway, and ungovernable behavior. These behaviors are not illegal for adults, but are chargeable only for a person of juvenile status (age 0-18). The 1975 Florida legislature deleted CINS offenses as delinquent acts, but during the period of this study, a child could be charged and committed as a delinquent for CINS behavior. Effective July 1, 1975, a child charged with a CINS offense could only be adjudicated "dependent", and could not be treated as delinquent. The only exception to this rule is that a second-time CINS adjudication may result in a delinquent label and assignment to Youth Services.

In-Program Experience

The length of the selected commitment for the Training School sample averaged 6.9 months, or 206 days. Individual stays ranged from 55 to 728 days. Seven youngsters were committed longer than a year. Twenty-three youths in the TS sample had been committed prior to the selection commitment. The average length of time previously served was 7.2 months[7]. Multiple commitment youngsters spend an average of 6.4 months (range, 112-356 days) on the selected commitment, compared to 7.0 months (range, 55-674 days), or approximately two and a half weeks longer, for first commitment youth.

Eighteen of the TS sample were transfers, i.e., had spent part of their selected commitment time at some facility other than the one from which they were furloughed. Only one child was transferred more than once, so the total number of program shifts equals 19. The majority (10) of the transferred children came from another training school. Five youths were transferred from community-based YS programs, and one of these had been in two community programs prior to entering the TS. The remaining three comprised transfers of youthful offenders from adult corrections to Youth Services. For transfers, the mean length of time spent in the transferring facility(ies) was 3.6 months (range, 10-334 days) and the mean time spent at the furloughing facility was 6.6 months (range, 42-458 days), so that youths who were transferred spent a total average of 10.2 months on the selected commitment. Non-transferred youths spent a slightly shorter time at the furloughing facility, and therefore on the selected commitment, averaging 6.2 months (range 55-674 days). Transfers are thus seen to add about three weeks, the difference between a 6.2 and a 6.9 month average stay, to the average length of selected commitment for TS youth.

Administrative reasons were the most frequently cited rationales for transfer, accounting for 11 of the moves. Runaways led to transfer in four cases; "not fitting into the program" or "failing to improve" were cited in three moves; and a new offense was committed (while on a run) in the last case.

Seventeen youths in the TS sample ran away during the selected commitment; four ran more than once. Three youngsters were returned in less than a day, thus the range of days on runaway status is 0 to 82 days, with the mean being 19 days[8]. The low number of runaways as well as the speedy return of many who do run must be partially attributed to the out-of-the-way placement of the Training Schools.

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[7] Information was missing for calculating length of prior commitments for one case. Range for the 22 cases, 20-287 days.

[8] Only 14 cases are included in calculating the mean and range, since there was no information in the files on the length of time three of the runaways were missing.

Placement in the Adjustment Unit provides a "cool-off" time for violent or destructive youth in the Training Schools. It is used freely; nevertheless, its availability does furnish a management tool for program personnel. Nineteen of the TS sample had been in the adjustment unit from 1 to 7 times each during their selected commitment, for a total of 53 instances.

Post Program Outcome: Success vs. Recidivism

Post program outcome, the major focus of the study, and the primary long-term measure of program effect is the subject of the following section. After 18 months follow-up from furlough, the "corrected" success rate, (with a correctional weighting to compensate for the over-representation of females in the sample) was 57%[9], and the recidivism rate was 43%.

Of the reinvolvements in the justice system reflected in the 43% recidivism rate, more than half were juvenile reinvolvements. Table 2 displays the specific outcomes for both the "successes" and the recidivists during the 18-month follow-up period.

Table 2 Reinvolvement in the Criminal Justice System for the TS Sample: With 18 Month Follow-Up

Successes = 57% (corrected)*		Recidivists = 43% (corrected)*		
No reinvolvement:	52	Revoked to YS:	6	
Jailed/released:	2	Recommitted to YS:	18	Juvenile
Court Fine:	6	Adult Probation:	5	
		Suspended Sentence:	1	
("Raw" Success Rate* = 60%)		Jail Commitment:	6	Adult
		Prison commitment:	4	
		("Raw" Recidivism Rate* = 40%)		

* See Appendix A for explanation of the difference between the "raw" and "corrected" success and recidivism rates.

[9] See Appendix A for the calculation of the corrected sex-weighted success rate(s).

During the additional segment of follow-up time, which represented 0 to 12 months depending on furlough date of each case, there were 20 further instances of reinvolvement in the criminal justice system. However, 11 of these instances involved youngsters who were already listed as recidivists due to a failure in the initial 18-month follow-up period. Table 3 summarizes the recidivism outcomes for the TS sample over the total follow-up period. (The last placement of multiple recidivists is shown, in instances where more than one reinvolvement occurred.)

Table 3 Reinvolvement in the Criminal Justice System for the TS Sample: With up-to-30 Month Follow-Up

Successes: 47% (Corrected)*		Recidivists: 53% (Corrected)*		
No reinvolvement:	44	Revoked to YS:	7	Juvenile
Jailed/released:	1	Recommitted to YS:	21	
Court fine:	6	Suspended sentence:	1	
		Adult Probation:	7	
("Raw" Success Rate*:	51%)	Jail Commitment:	5	Adult
		Prison Commitment:	8	
		("Raw" Recidivism Rate:	49%)	

* See Appendix A for explanation of the difference between the "raw" and "corrected" success and recidivism rates.

A total of 87 post furlough offenses were recorded for the 56 members of the TS sample who were "reinvolved" (including here the seven non-recidivists who did have some legal involvement).

For the 49 recidivists, a comparison was made of their (first) recidivous offense as contrasted to their selected commitment offense, and it was determined that there was not a significant change in the seriousness of the violations. A cross-classification of individuals by their two offenses (not shown) found that 21 recidivists committed the same type of offense, 16 committed lesser offenses and 12 committed more serious offenses.

The amount of time between furlough and reinvolvement averaged 14 months (range, 59-871 days) for the TS sample. Only 22% of failures occurred within six months of the furlough. These data lend themselves to the interpretation that the program effect is strongly carried over into the post-program period, deterring the rapid return to crime often found in the period immediately following return to the community. The effect of the YS Aftercare (parole) program which provides supervision contracts for all furloughees is also undoubtedly a factor, albeit unmeasured.

Relationship Between Key Variables and Successes

Table 4 displays the relationship between success-recidivism and the key background and in-program experience variables. Only three significant relationships were found: Sex, whether the child was previously committed, and offense of selected commitment. Sex had the strongest relationship to success, with females having much higher success rates than males. This finding is consistent with that of previous studies of the Florida TS population as well as with published delinquency literature. Youths who were first-time commitments were more successful than those who had been committed one or more times previously. With regard to commitment offense, youths charged with property or victimless crimes were significantly less successful than those who were committed for either more serious (persons) or less serious (technical or CINS) offenses.

None of the measures of in-program experience--length of commitment, whether transferred during the selected commitment, runaways and placement in the adjustment unit -- were significantly related to post-program outcome.

Comparison of Data with Previous TS Study

The final section of this analysis compares data from the current study of 1973 TS furloughs with an earlier study of 1972 furloughs. While the 1972 sample was a three part stratified random sample[10] rather than the one simple random sample used in the 1973 study, a statistical test for significance of the difference between the size of the similar sub-samples[11] within each year showed no difference. Thus the two year's samples may be compared as wholes as well as on a sub-sample level.

Comparisons were made on both sub-sample and total sample levels on all variables which were common to both studies: race, age at selected furlough, urban/non-urban county, offense, length of selected commitment, recidivism and length of time from furlough to recidivism. Table 5 lists the comparisons which produced statistically significant differences.

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10 For the study of 1972 furloughs, one sub-sample (N=44) was comprised of male first commitments who had no transfers, the second sub-sample (N=49) was males with previous commitments and/or transfers, and the third (N=49) was females, regardless of prior commitments or transfers.

11 When the 1973 sample was divided into groups of similar composition to the three sub-samples of 1972, the size of the three groups were: male first commitments, N=36; males with previous commitments and/or transfers, N=33; females, N=31. Note that since females are approximately the same proportion of the 1972 sample as the 1973 sample, an adjusted weighing should be applied in computing an overall recidivism rate to correct for this over-representation.

Table 4: Relationship Between Key Variables and Success for TS Sample

Variable	# Cases*	# Non-Recidivists	# Recidivists	% Success	χ^2	signif.
1) Sex						
Female	31	26	5	84%	19.43**	.001
Male	69	25	44	36%	df=1	
2) Race						
Black	47	25	22	47%	.101	.99
White	52	26	26	50%	df=1	
3) Age at Selected Furlough						
≤14 years	23	11	12	48%	4.235	.127
15-16 years	51	23	28	45%	df=2	
≥17 years	26	18	8	69%		
4) Committing County						
Urban	51	26	25	51%	.043	.99
Non-Urban	49	26	23	53%	df=1	
5) Living Arrangement Prior to Commitment						
Both Natural Parents	38	22	16	58%	4.822	.307
Mother only	26	15	11	58%	df=4	
Mother and Stepfather	15	4	11	27%		
Father (with or without Stepmother)	7	4	3	57%		
Other (relative or non-relative)	14	7	7	50%		
6) Family Income						
less than $5,000	28	12	16	43%	3.681	.298
$5,000 - $10,000	34	19	15	56%	df=5	
$10,100 - $15,000	10	4	6	40%		
more than $15,000	5	1	4	80%		

* Where number of cases does not total 100 on any variable, missing data accounts for the variation.

** A chi square was calculated for an adjusted table of sex by recidivism (with 23.5 females and 76.5 males) and the result was still significant (χ^2 = 16.016, df=1 signif =.001).

TABLE 4 (contd.)

Variable	# Cases	# Non-Recidivists	# Recidivists	% Success	χ^2	signif.
7) Previous Commitments						
None	77	43	34	56%	3.144	.081
1-3	23	8	15	35%	df=1	
8) Offense of Selected Commitment						
Persons	17	10	7	59%	8.654	.075
Property	42	17	25	40%	df=4	
Victimless	11	4	7	36%		
Technical	15	9	6	60%		
CINS	15	12	3	80%		
9) Runaways During Selected Commitment						
none	10	10	9	53%	.163	.99
1 or more	17	8	9	47%	df=1	
10) Length of Selected Commitment						
less than 4 mo.	19	10	9	53%	13.031+	.03
4-6 mo.	36	19	17	53%	df=4	
6-8 mo.	20	9	11	45%		
8-10 mo.	10	1	9	10%		
more than 10 mo.	13	11	2	85%		

+ Because of small cell sizes and extreme values, this χ^2 is not truly valid, despite its significance level. When the last two categories of the Length of SC were collapsed into 1 (8 months or more), the χ^2 dropped to .363 (signif. at <.99 with 4df).

Averages may suffice to summarize the first two differences between 1972 and 1973 male samples. The 1972 TS sample stayed longer on the selected commitment (mean=8.7 months) than the 1973 sample (mean=6.9 months). The 1972 data was readily available only in grouped form on the variable Time from Furlough to Recidivism. In the 1972 TS sample, 43 youths recidivated within a year of furlough; this was 78% of the total recidivism discovered during the 18-24 month follow-up. These data could be interpreted as meaning that the impact of the program lasted longer for the 1973 sample than was the case for the 1972 sample. Among the 1973 female sample, the proportion of crimes against persons was substantially higher than in the 1972 sample (22% vs. 4%) and the percentage of victimless offenses was lower (42% vs. 59%). Note that this increase in serious offenses did not hold for males.

TABLE 5

Summary of Significant Comparisons Between the 1972 and 1973 TS Data

variable:	Total Male Samples 72 vs 73	Male First Commitments 72 vs 73	Male Previous Commitment and/or Transfer 72 vs. 73	Total Female Samples 72 vs. 73
	Length of Selected Commitment (SC)	Length of SC	Length of SC	----
	Time From Furlough to Recidivism	Time From Furlough to Recidivism	----	----
	----	----	----	Offense
	----	Age	----	----
	----	County	----	----

The relationships between sample characteristics and recidivism were examined in each of the two years studied and few significant relationships were found. In the 1972 sample, offense was the only variable significantly related to recidivism, and this relationship held only when each of the sub-samples was considered separately[12], not for the total sample when the data were grouped. In the 1973 total data, offense was not significantly related to recidivism. Sex was the only variable which showed a statistically significant relationship to recidivism, with males having a much higher failure rate. In the 1973 subsample of male first commitments and for the total sample, age was related to recidivism (with younger children failing more frequently), but age was not predictive of recidivism for the previously committed and/or transferred sub-sample.

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12 First commitments for property offenses had the highest failure rates (73%), and the few (3) CINS offenders all succeeded. Among previously committed and/or transferred boys, CINS and persons offenders had the most failures (100% and 60% respectively), but there were small numbers in both categories (two and five youths, respectively).

Summary and Conclusions

Examination of sample data on 1973 Training School furloughs has provided a profile of the age, race, sex, family structure, and juvenile justice record of the institutional population. The sample for this study did not differ significantly from a sample of furloughs from 1972 on any of the background variables, except for the distribution of commitment offenses for females. (There were more offenses against persons and fewer victimless offenses among the 1973 female furloughs.)

In-program experience was evaluated by available data. The average length of commitment was found to be 6.9 months (1.8 months shorter than the average stay of 1972 furloughs), although first commitment youths (77% of the sample) averaged slightly longer, and transferred youngsters (18%) averaged much longer stays. Runaways and adjustment unit placements were a part of the in-program experience of 17% and 19% of the sample respectively. None of these measures of the in-program experience were found to be predictive of recidivism.

Post program outcome was measured primarily by recidivism, or the rate of reinvolvement in the criminal justice system. With an 18-month follow-up period, the Training School recidivism rate was 43%. Extending the follow-up period where possible, and thus using a variable period of 18-30 months, the recidivism rate was higher, 53%.

Data from 1972 furloughs, with an 18-24 month follow-up, also showed a 53% recidivism rate, when the female sample was appropriately weighted to represent their actual proportion of the population (as was done in calculating the 1973 results). While the final percentages for the two years are identical, the longer follow-up time of the 1973 study must be accounted for in interpretations of the findings. The 1973 rate would probably be slightly lower than that of 1972 if the follow-up times were identical.

Dissatisfaction with the simple, dichotomous indicator of program outcome offered by recidivism led to the examination of "partial success" measures to expand the evaluative approach. No significant change was found in the seriousness of offense charged when the selected commitment offense and the recidivism offense were compared for individuals who failed, so the program cannot claim partial success on this point. Time between furlough and reinvolvement (recidivism) averaged fourteen months.

Partial success by this measure was significantly greater than in the 1972 sample; the 1973 furloughs had less than half as many recidivists within the first 12 months from furlough as did the 1972 sample. Disposition of the recidivists was also considered. Slightly more than half of the recidivists returned to the juvenile justice system; the remainder going to adult probation, jail or prison. Age rather than severity of offense is no doubt the major determinant of juvenile vs. adult disposition, so this may not be a very useful indication of differential success.

Recidivism was found to be significantly related to sex, prior commitments and offense type, with males, youths with prior commitments and those charged with property or victimless crimes having higher failure rates after release. None of these empirical relationships were surprise finds. Similar results have been found in numerous other research studies (see pp 4-6) over time. One might question why other commonly studied variables, for example, age, which is also often found to be related to recidivism, are not predictive of failure in this specific sample. More important and interesting to pursue however, is the issue of how to move program evaluation beyond the current reliance on recidivism as the primary outcome measure of correctional treatment programs.

Further improvements of evaluative measures of program outcome should be a goal of future studies. In the Florida Youth Services system, data on aftercare (juvenile parole) status progress is available on Case Review Cards completed monthly on all cases under field supervision. Ability to match cases, and mesh this data-source with sample populations, however, presents costly analysis problems which have not yet been overcome.

More sophisticated and exacting ways of measuring what goes on during the "treatment process" are also needed. Runaways, transfers, etc. tap only the negative aspects of adjustment. What is needed for evaluative purposes is clear statements of the objective, measurable (probably individualized) goals which a youth must attain in order to be furloughed, as well as an in-program information system capable of tracking data on progress toward these goals at systematic intervals. Steps toward implementing these ideas for better evaluation research would also provide much improved management data for program operation, and should be eagerly sought.

APPENDIX A: Correction Procedure

Following is the procedure for calculating the corrected Training School success rate, adjusting for the sample's over-representation of females:

1) Female success rate = 84% (26 of 31 cases at both the 18 month follow-up point and after total follow-up.

2) Females should be represented in the sample at 23.5% of the total 100 cases (rather than 31%)

3) Male recidivism rate = 49% (34 of 69 cases) at the end of 18 months; 36% (25 of 69 cases) after total follow-up

4) Males should be represented in the sample at 76.5% of the total 100 cases (rather than 69%)

.235 (84) + .765(.49) = 57% corrected, sex-weighted success rate at end of 18 months

.235 (.84) + .765(.36) = 47% corrected, sex-weighted success rate at end of total follow-up

Appendix B: Offense Codes

Offenses against persons:

1. Murder
2. Manslaughter
3. Sexual Battery
4. Armed Robbery
5. Other Robbery
6. Aggravated Assault
7. Assault (except aggravated)

Offenses against property:

8. Arson
9. Burglary (and Breaking and Entering)
10. Grand Larceny (except Auto)
11. Auto Theft
12. Receiving Stolen Property
13. Other Felony
14. Unauthorized Use of Motor Vehicle
15. Petit Larceny (except Shoplifting)
16. Shoplifting

Victimless Offenses:

17. Concealed Firearm
18. Narcotic Drug Law Violation
19. Marijuana Offense
20. Acloholic Beverage Possession
21. Other Drug Law Violation
22. Concealed Weapon (except firearm)
23. Criminal Mischief (Vandalism)
24. Trespassing
25. Prostitution
26. Misdemeanor Sex Offense
27. Disorderly Intoxication
28. Loitering and Prowling
29. Traffic (delinquency)
30. Other Misdemeanor

Technical Violations:

31. Violation of Probation (technical)
32. Violation of Aftercare (technical)
33. Violation of Court Order (technical)

CINS (Child in Need of Supervision) Offenses:

34. Runaway
35. Trunacy
36. Incorrigable, Beyond Control
37. CINS (unspecified)

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